CONTENT.

Teach us no more while heaven is o'er us,
Sing to us never in well attuned chorus,
That only a journey of woe is before us—
Life but a burden scarce worthy the bearing.
Fair is the sun in the blue ether glowing,
Fields with their riches of harvest are waving,
Coolest of brooklets the valleys are laving,
These varied blessings make "life worth the living."

There's music divine in the ocean waves' roar,
The glad mountain stream wending on to the shore,
In the skylark that rises the azure to soar,
Each yields its Maker a tribute of prayer;
Life, to be joyous, must fill its intent;
With the dark sorrows some pleasures are blent;
Only the doubting heart loses content;
Deem not our earth but a "desert of care."

Think of the nations redeemed and refined;
Think of the infinite treasures of mind;
See how love's girdle encircles mankind,
Hope's beaming star for our guidance is given;
Spring never fails us its life giving showers,
June has for ages entwined us in flowers,
The ripe matured fruitage of autumn is ours;
If Eden has vanished, we've still a bright Heaven.

Mrs. N. B. Morange in Arkansaw Traveler.

LANCE ELLIOTT'S IDEA.

"To be just like this or something like it all my life, hardly able to read or write my own name, always to be a poor, ignorant drudge?" Lance Elliott dashed the tears angrily from his eyes with a feeling of shame, though there was no one near to see his wet cheeks and quivering lip. "Coward! To be crying at my age!"

With his elbows resting on the iron brake wheel and his head between his hands, Lance stood thinking sadly of his unhappy lot. He was only fourteen years old, but for nearly two years he had earned his living in various ways. He had blacked boots, run errands and held horses. More than once he had gone supperless to bed, and very often the bed had been a hayloft or a cowshed. Now, however, he was regularly employed selling papers on the express train which left Woodstock at 9:30 every evening. Though he was earning fair wages considering his age, he was growing more and more dissatisfied every day, for he saw no prospect of improvement.

Mr. Bascom, the conductor, to whom Lance had confided his troubles, had said, "The thing, my boy, is to do your duty in whatever position you are placed, and let the rest take care of itself."

But Lance was not content with this. "It seems to me," he had answered, "just the difference between walking on level ground and climbing up a pair of stairs."

Tonight he had sold all his papers for the trip and had gone out upon the rear platform of the train where he could be alone. The rapid motion of the express seemed to soothe his troubled thoughts, and he stood a long while watching the lights along the tracks as they flashed by and were lost in the darkness behind.

As he gazed dreamily before him gradually a dim perception of something unusual or out of place among the familiar objects along the road grew upon him. At first he could not make out what it was, but in another moment he understood. It was a new light and one that he had never seen before.

But what chiefly puzzled Lance was the position of the light. It seemed to be directly in the center of the line of rails upon which the express was traveling. It could not be a signal lantern, for it was too high in the air; besides there was no signal at that part of the road.

As he continued to watch the strange object with growing wonder, he suddenly became aware that the light was in motion. More than that, it was following the express! As the train swept around a curve the light vanished, only to appear a moment later, showing that it, too, had come around the curve.

Lance had already guessed what it was, but he was afraid to believe his own eyes. If it should be that! He felt a cold chill creep over him.

While he was confusedly trying to think what he ought to do the door of the car opened, and Mr. Bascom, the conductor, stepped out upon the platform. Without waiting for him to speak Lance caught him by the sleeve, and pointing to the light behind exclaimed:

"Look! Look! Do you know what that is?"

Mr. Bascom shaded his eyes with his hand and gazed earnestly at the light. Then, without a word, he turned and hurried back through the train.

In another moment the engine of the express sounded a shrill warning whistle, and Lance felt the train suddenly increase its speed. Presently Mr. Bascom accompanied by one of the brakemen was back on the platform beside Lance again.

Both men examined the light, which had meantime drawn much nearer, with evident alarm. Then the conductor swung the red lantern he carried several times.

"That is No. 26," said Mr. Bascom. "She was standing on the siding at Richfield as we passed."

"What does she mean by following us?" asked the brakeman. "And why doesn't she answer our signals?"

"Because," said Mr. Bascom, "there is no one on board to see or hear them."

"A runaway!" exclaimed the brakeman.

"Just that," replied the conductor. "It has happened before. They have run her out on the track ready to take her train, and somehow she has got started."

Lance, who had listened attentively to this conversation, understood it perfectly. The light behind them was the headlight of engine No. 26. He, too, had seen it on the side track as the express passed. As Mr. Bascom had said, after the express had gone by, this engine had drawn out upon the main track ready to take its train, which was not to start until half an hour after the express, and in some unknown manner had got started under a full head of steam with no one on board to guide it.

Engine No. 26, as Lance knew, was one of the most powerful engines on the road, and it was running free, whereas the express engine was drawing six heavily loaded cars. Unless something could be done to stop the runaway, it must soon catch up with the express.

The express should have stopped at Beverly, but there was no time for that now; and as the train roared by Lance caught a glimpse of white astonished faces, waving arms and flashing lights. Then all was swallowed in darkness again.

By this time the passengers of the express had learned of their danger, and were in a state of panic that the utmost efforts of the trainmen, themselves pale with alarm, could quell. Mr. Bascom seemed paralyzed with consternation, and unable to think of any means of averting the catastrophe.

Badly frightened as he was himself, yet Lance had been pondering deeply during the past few minutes. Now he suddenly pulled Mr. Bascom's sleeve, and raising his voice so as to be heard over the din, he said, "Just after we cross the next bridge there is a heavy up grade."

"Yes, yes! What of it?"

"Wasn't a train stalled there a few months ago, just after the oil train had broken down?"

Mr. Bascom nodded; he began to understand.

"Well, then, why can't we oil the tracks and stall that engine?"

Mr. Bascom reflected for a moment. "We can try," he said at length, his pale face clearing a little. "It is at least a chance," and he hurried away.

Lance's idea was this, as every one knows when railway tracks are coated with ice the driving wheels of an engine will sometimes slip and revolve rapidly without moving the engine itself. The same is true when the tracks are coated with oil. When the train is under headway and on a level this might not happen, but on a steep up grade the headway would be lost, and the wheels would probably slip on rails covered with ice or oil.

Mr. Bascom reappeared, pushing his way through the terror stricken crowd of passengers, carrying two large oil cans, each containing a gallon or more of the thick mixture of oil and tallow which is used to lubricate the machinery of road engines. To each can was attached a long curved spout, on the opposite side a handle.

The express was already mounting the steep incline, and behind it, not a hundred yards distant, roared the pursuing engine, its headlight streaming broadly in the anxious faces of the men gathered on the rear platform of the car. Mr. Bascom handed one of the tallow cans to the brakemen and then both men dropped on their knees, and leaning far over the platform held the curved spouts of the cans within a few inches of the rails.

As the express sped on, Lance saw the thick fluid rush from the spouts upon the rails, which glistened in the glare of the advancing engine's light. Every one, passengers and trainmen, who had crowded to the rear of the car to witness the experiment, held his breath as the runaway engine rushed upon the long shining track.

On it came with undiminished speed; then, yes, it was surely so—the distance between the express and the engine was widening! And now as the imperiled train labored up the incline, puffing and panting like an exhausted runner, all there uttered a wild cry of joy and relief.

Engine No. 26 had gradually lost its headway, and now, hissing and snorting, stood still upon the oiled track, its wheels revolving uselessly, with a noise like distant thunder.

A short distance farther on the express was also stopped, and the engineer ran back and mounting into the stalled engine turned off the steam, rendering the pursuing engine incapable of further harm. A train hand, who understood the business, took charge of it, and ran it back to the station whence it had escaped.

There was a meeting of certain passengers on the express held on the spot, and a vote of thanks to the conductor, Mr. Bascom, passed. That gentleman, however, declared that no thanks were due him, and led forward Lance Elliott, looking very red and bashful, explaining that the saving of the express was wholly due to the boy's ready suggestion as to oiling the rails.

Lance's hand was very nearly shaken off at the wrist by the enthusiastic passengers, and much to his discomfiture several ladies insisted on kissing him. Meanwhile Mr. Bascom had been talking in a low tone to a group of well dressed men, and now he turned to the boy and said with his kindly smile:

"Lance, my boy, these gentlemen agree with me that your clever idea is well worth the course at college you have always longed for, and they have made arrangements to provide the necessary funds."

Lance tried to find words to express his thanks, but he choked and the tears sprang to his eyes. However, the gentlemen seemed to think he had said enough.

As the passengers resumed their seats and the train started on again Mr. Bascom said to Lance, "Did I not tell you to do your duty and let the rest take care of itself?"

"Yes," answered Lance, with a swelling breast "and now I am going to climb the stairs."—Harper's Young People.

The National Cloth of Ireland.

As far back as the history of Ireland can be traced in writings mention is made of a coarse woolen cloth woven by the people of the country and known to them as frieze. The name is said to be drawn from the ancient Frisa in the Netherlands, whence possibly the art of making the fabric was derived. So remote, however, is the period when frieze was first made in Erin that no one can tell when or where or by whom it was originally spun. Century after century, so long that the mind of man runneth not to the contrary, it has been the national cloth of Ireland, the distinctive dress of patriot, peasant and peer, and since the Seventeenth century an outward badge of the people's aspirations for nationality.—Donohoe's Magazine.

WITNESSED A TRAGEDY.

I don't like Menken. Undoubtedly he is a clever—almost a brilliantly clever—man, but he is, to my mind, just a trifle too unconventional in his ideas.

He is, however, very good company, and I have passed a good many evenings with him over a pipe, and will acquit him of ever having bored me.

I went to his lodgings with him a few nights ago from the club, and soon found myself seated in an armchair by the fireside, with a pipe in my mouth and a glass of most excellent whisky and water beside me. We talked of many things, till at length, I forget how, the conversation turned on murders and murderers.

Some time previous London, and indeed the whole country, had been appalled by a series of ghastly murders, all apparently committed by the same hand, though in no case was a clew afforded by which the murderer might be discovered.

Menken explained a theory of his own on the subject, as novel as it was startling, when the subject turned to circumstantial evidence and its value.

"After all," I said, "in ninety-nine murders out of a hundred circumstantial evidence and motive are the only helps to conviction. No one in his senses commits a murder if there is any one looking on."

"No," said Menken slowly, "people prefer doing these things in private, if possible. But sometimes they are not aware that there are witnesses."

He paused and filled his pipe.

"It is not every one," he went on, "who has been a secret witness of a murder, but I have."

"You!" I exclaimed.

Menken nodded.

"Was he convicted and hanged?" I asked.

"It wasn't a 'he,' but a 'she,'" said Menken smiling. "And 'she' was not convicted and hanged, or even tried."

"But surely you"— I was beginning when Menken broke in.

"My dear fellow, nothing I could have said could have convicted the woman. It was a very odd case altogether; one of the most ingenious things I ever heard of. I will tell you the story, if you like. It will be simpler than you getting it out of me by cross examination.

"About four years ago I was traveling in Switzerland. In the course of my rambles I reached Tanserwald. I was much taken with the place; the scenery was superb, the hotel old fashioned but delightfully comfortable.

"There were several people staying there besides myself, but as I am a gregarious sort of fellow, I was rather glad of it. After I had been there about a fortnight, on entering the dining room for dinner I noticed some new arrivals. Among them was a party of three English—an old gentleman, his young wife, and a daughter of the old gentleman's by a former marriage. The daughter, poor girl, was blind. She was about twenty, and looked delicate. I cannot say she was pretty, but yet she was not unpleasing. The old boy, her father, was just like other English gentlemen you see about.

"The wife was decidedly pretty; she was about eight and twenty, fair, with gray eyes and a most undeniable figure. They seemed to be well off, but they did not hold much intercourse with the rest of the inmates of the hotel.

"You know I rather pride myself on my powers of observation. Though I made no sort of acquaintance with the party, I used to watch them and study them, as I do all my fellow creatures whom I come across.

"I was not long in finding out three facts. First, that the old gentleman was madly fond of his wife and indifferent to his daughter; secondly, that the daughter adored her father and did not like his wife; thirdly, that the wife hated them both.

"I was all the more pleased with my perception of these facts, inasmuch as no one else in the hotel had the least idea of the situation. Outwardly there was perfect harmony in the trio.

"One morning, after the party had been in the hotel about a week, the old gentleman did not appear as usual at breakfast, and in reply to inquiries his wife said that he was not feeling well. In the course of the day the doctor—an Englishman, by the way—was sent for, and in the evening the landlord, who was as angry with the old man as if he had got his illness on purpose, told me confidentially, with tears of rage, that the old gentleman had been pronounced by the doctor to be ill of gastric fever, and that the case was serious. The landlord's anxiety was not without reason. The fact could not be concealed, and the visitors began to leave in haste. Only a few besides me remained. I am not in the least nervous about illness, and I had no intention of leaving the place for such a cause, a resolve which raised me greatly in the landlord's esteem.

"One morning, about ten days after the old gentleman's seizure, I met the doctor coming down stairs. He looked much less anxious than for some days past; indeed, there was an expression almost of satisfaction on his face.

"'How is your patient?' I asked.

"'The crisis is past, or almost past,' he answered cheerfully. 'He owes his life, if he pulls through, to the nursing of his daughter and his wife, especially the daughter, who is a trump! He is now asleep, and upon that sleep everything depends. If he wakens in three or four hours of his own accord he will be safe, in all human probability. Everything depends on his sleep. I have told the landlord to give strict orders to every servant to be most careful. There must be no noise of any sort. If he were wakened suddenly the shock would kill him as certainly as if you fired a bullet through his brain. I have just told his wife of this. All that is wanted is—sleep.'

"The doctor nodded to me as he went down the steps from the hotel, smiling as if anticipating a triumph for his art.

"'Monsieur,' said a voice at my elbow. I turned, and saw my friend the landlord. 'Monsieur knows,' said he, smiling sourly, 'that Austrian count who was going to be so brave? Who had no fears for sickness? Well, that so brave man, he also is now frightened—he has gone, monsieur! He went early this morning, making excuses, but he could not deceive me! He was frightened. He tried to joke; he said he could not sleep; that he had heard all night the ticking in the wall, which, he said, means death.'

"'That is an English superstition, too, I said.

"'Bah!' said the innkeeper, with concentrated scorn; 'these are not times for such foolish superstitions. Monsieur has no such foolish fancies?'

"I laughed. 'Ah, monsieur is brave! Look. The Austrian's room is that very room monsieur wished to have when he first came. It looks out upon the glacier, and is perhaps my best room. Monsieur thought he would prefer one less expensive on the floor above. Monsieur remembers? Well, courage deserves to be rewarded. Monsieur shall have the room for the same price as the one he has now.'

"I thanked my friend, the landlord. It was certainly a room I had coveted. The view was superb. It was nearer the dining and smoking room—in every way a great improvement on the one I was occupying.

"'Can I have it once?' I asked.

"'Oh, certainly!' Of course monsieur knows,' the landlord went on slowly and looking a little doubtfully at me, 'that it is the room next to the sick-room where that old man is lying ill!'

"I laughed, and I think the expression of my face reassured the landlord as to my being completely indifferent to such matters, for he went on:

"'Monsieur is a man! The room is ready and at your disposal.'

"He was going away, but came back quickly. 'Only monsieur will pardon me for reminding him that the doctor has ordered that no noise shall be made near the sickroom. He says the old man's life depends on his sleeping quietly. It would be better, perhaps, not to move monsieur's luggage down till the evening.'

"Of course I assented; but feeling desirous of seeing my new and much coveted possession, and feeling sure of my ability to enter it without making any noise, I went up stairs, quietly stole down the corridor, and entered the room without a possibility of my having been heard. It was a large, bright, cheerful apartment, in the older part of the hotel. It was wainscoted, with oak panels. The window was large, and, as I have mentioned before, commanded one of the most exquisite views to be found in Switzerland.

"I looked around the room with a sense of satisfaction. I have told you I am observant of my fellow creatures; I am not less so of inanimate objects. I have an eye in such matters a detective might envy. I soon saw a mark or cut in the wainscoting on one side of the room. It was so small that I believe many men might have passed days in the room without noticing it. I am an inquisitive man, and I at once went to it and examined it. It was a chink in the wood; I stooped and looked through. The whole of the interior of the sick-room was visible. Three silent figures were the occupants. On the bed lay the old man sleeping, his gray hairs on the pillow; at the side knelt in prayer his blind daughter; behind the daughter—close behind—was the wife. She alone seemed living. She was drawing stealthily—oh, so stealthily and slowly—a small round table laden with jugs and medicine bottles across the floor.

"At first I did not realize what she was doing. I knew she had every motive to be silent in her movements, but I caught sight of her face! It was the face of a devil! Never was eyes so hideously expressive of murderous hate! In a flash I understood it all.

"She was moving the table to a position such that the slightest movement of the kneeling figure of the blind daughter, praying for her father's life, would hurl it and its fragile burden to the ground.

"I dare say you think I am a callous sort of fellow, but I assure you I was horror struck. I would have given worlds to warn the poor child, but knew not how. To have called out would have been as fatal as the catastrophe itself.

"I felt stupefied—paralyzed. The end came before my swimming brain could find any way to help. The poor girl rose, her hands still clasped. I saw the table reel, and as I, sick with horror, withdrew my eyes I heard the crash, followed by a piercing shriek"——

Menken paused. "Give me the whisky, old chap. Thanks."

"Did he die?" I asked.

"He was as dead as if you had fired a pistol through his brain," said Menken quietly.

After a pause he went on: "I slipped out of the room before the hubbub began. No one ever knew I had been in it. I had, however, to sleep in it that night, and though you know I am not a superstitious fellow at all, I assure you it was a very uncomfortable night. I kept starting out of my sleep, thinking I heard the crash and scream next door. It took me nearly a week to get over it."

We smoked in silence for some minutes.

"I wonder what became of that woman!" I said.

"Oh, she married again. The daughter died about a year after this happened, I believe."

"How did you find out?" I asked, a little surprised.

"Well, it was rather curious. I went to stay down in Devonshire last summer in a country house. The first person I saw was our ingenious friend, the murderess, quite cheerful and jolly. I took her in to dinner."

Somehow I don't like Menken, but he never bores me.—Cornhill Magazine.

Telemachus in the Metropolis.

Telemachus, the Hellenist, fell asleep in the grass near the thirteen trees planted by Alexander Hamilton. Telemachus is old and not handsome. His face is tanned and marked like a book wormed folio of Stephanus. His forehead, with its thick eyebrows, is exactly similar to a mossgrown overhanging rock. He had been making marginal notes on his rare copy of Pindar, and the book was open by his side. Young men on their way to the tennis ground, so prettily dressed that they were as if made of sugar, marmalade and whipped cream, smiled, not with malice, but amused.

Their companions, the eldest under twenty, charming as are girls not disillusionized by the cooking school, the keeping of house accounts and other commonplace things, stopped. One of them opened her scarlet sunshade over his head, another picked up his precious book and read in soft, enchanting tone until Telemachus awoke, and then she greeted him in Greek that her friend repeated in chorus. There is no happier man than Telemachus, and none so sure that everything is modern.—New York Times.

How the Kangaroo Uses Its Tail.

The common opinion that kangaroos use their strong, muscular tails as a means of propulsion in their flying leaps, which often cover from twenty to thirty feet each, is at once seen to be fallacious by any one who joins in a kangaroo hunt. When sitting erect in attitude of observation the tail is used as an important factor in the support of the body, and when the animal is feeding (at which times it moves about in a lazy, crawling gait upon all four of its feet), it drags limply over the earth.

In running, however, it is curved gracefully upward to clear the ground, and never once touches it during the kangaroo's flight, being seen to fulfill the office of a balancing pole and preserving the animal's equilibrium by shifting positions according to the nature of the ground.—Boston Journal.

The Telephone in New Brunswick.

The telephone has an enviable reputation in one family at least. An old farmer who keeps a summer boarding house on the St. John river, in New Brunswick, was asked by an American how letters should be addressed to reach him. "Oh, don't mind the letters," he said, "there's a telephone up to the house. Whenever you want me, just call me up and my wife will answer you." "But," said the other, "I'm an American, and I may want to write you some time." "Well," answered the old farmer, "haven't you people got telephones in your country?" "Of course, but"— "Well," interrupted the Canadian, "then just call me up when you want me and I guess you'll get us." That settled the discussion right there.—New York Tribune.